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U. S. Department of Agriculture

The 1951 Strawberry Book

FROM

BENNING'S

W. E. BENNING

CLYDE, N. Y.

Phone Clyde 5083

Established 1909 by H. H. Benning

No. 1216

State of New York

Department of Agriculture and Markets

C. Chester DuMond, Commissioner

Certificate of Inspection of Nursery Stock

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the Strawberry Plants of W. E. Benning of Clyde, County of Wayne, State of New York, have been duly examined in compliance with the Agriculture and Markets Law and have been found to be apparently free from all injurious insects, and plant diseases. This certificate is valid until October 1, 1951 unless revoked before that date.

Dated Albany, N. Y. Sept. 12, 1950.

C. CHESTER DUMOND, Commissioner.

A. B. BUCHHOLZ, Director, Bureau Plant Industry.

TO OUR CUSTOMERS

The outlook for strawberries is good. With high industrial activity and high consumer income in prospect for some time to come there should be a good market for all the strawberries produced. Fresh strawberries have always been one of the most prized of all fruits. The growing frozen food industry has put delicious strawberries on the nation's dinner tables the year around. This frozen product is just as popular as the fresh fruit creating an expanding market which is taking more and more berries every year. All this means more dollars in your pocket, Mr. Strawberry Grower!

With the Armed Forces and the growing defense program taking more and more man power, labor may become a limiting factor in strawberry production. The larger growers who depend on outside help will be affected the most. The many smaller growers whose operations are on a family basis will not be affected much. It looks like a good time to set all the strawberries your prospective labor supply can handle.

Reports show a smaller than average supply of plants available this Spring. Our own supply is considerably under that of 1950. It more nearly approaches the situation in 1948 when we had to disappoint many customers who did not order early.

We urge that you place your order early—just as soon as you decide what varieties and how many you want. We will reserve them for you until shipping time.

We take every precaution to keep our plants true to name and they are sold as such. However, should they prove otherwise, we will not be responsible for more than the purchase price of the plants.

Our packing is carefully done to insure arrival of the plants in good condition. However, should you have any complaints to make regarding shortages, poor condition of the plants, etc., they must be made immediately upon arrival of the plants. We will make good anything for which we are at fault. We cannot be responsible for any conditions affecting the plants after their arrival as they are beyond our control.

We start shipping plants in the spring as soon as the weather permits digging. Usually this is about mid-April although in some years we are able to start earlier. We do not like to ship plants after about May 10 due to the danger of failure because of the lateness of the season. Orders received after that date will be filled at the purchaser's risk only. This means that our shipping season is short. Rainy wet weather can easily upset our shipping schedule as we ship only fresh dug plants. We will do our best to get your plants to you at the time you request but please bear in mind the foregoing facts if you do not receive your plants on just the day you want them.

We do not sell plants in the late summer and fall and do not recommend planting at that time.

Many of our customers may wish to drive to our place for their plants. We are located on the County highway between Clyde (on N. Y. Route 31) and Seneca Falls (on N. Y. Route 5 and U. S. Route 20) being 4 miles south of Clyde and 10 miles north of Seneca Falls. If you wish to come after your plants we should be notified a couple of days in advance in order that we may have your plants ready.

We are not open for business on Sunday.

Cash must accompany all orders unless other arrangements are made.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

Care of the Plants on Arrival

The package should be opened at once and the roots of each bunch put in water for a few minutes. If necessary to hold the plants for a few days, wet the roots as stated and repack them loosely in the package or put in a pile with the roots inside with damp moss between the layers as in the original package, keeping the plants in a cool place. If it is necessary to hold them more than a few days, heel the plants in the soil. However, immediate planting insures the best results.

Soil

While strawberries are widely grown on many types of soil, individual varieties show a marked difference in their response to varying soil types. Some varieties, such as Premier are universally adapted and will do well on almost any soil. Others are more capricious and will vary from poor to excellent depending on the soil and the locality. Plenty of moisture is essential, especially just before and during picking. Soils rich in humus or organic matter are better adapted to hold sufficient moisture than are poor soils low in humus.

Plant on clean soil, free from weeds and grass. This will aid greatly in weed control.

Planting

Early Spring planting as soon as the ground can be well fitted is best. If delayed until late spring, the chances of heavy loss due to hot dry weather are much greater.

Set in rows $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 feet apart and 15 to 30 inches in the row. At these distances it will require 7,000 to 8,000 plants per acre.

Cultivation

Cultivate frequently enough to keep the soil in good tilth and to control weeds. Weed control is absolutely essential to successful berry growing.

Some of the more free-growing varieties tend to set too many plants for the best results. Recent experiments have shown that allowing only a limited number of strong, sturdy plants to set and removing all excess runners, will result in larger yields with a higher percentage of large, better quality berries.

Blossoms should be removed from the newly set plants as they appear.

Mulching

Late in the fall berries should be mulched to prevent heaving during the winter. Marsh hay, straw, leaves, strawy manure or any like material may be used. In the spring, the bulk of this mulch should be raked off the plants and put between the rows. This will aid in conserving moisture, a most important item in strawberry production, and in weed control. It also keeps the berries cleaner.

PREMIER — The Old Favorite

No berry is so popular and so widely planted in the northern states as Premier. Year after year it retains its popularity as other varieties come and go. Premier is a sure-cropper being very frost resistant. It is the best extra-early berry producing large crops and having a long picking season.

The berries are medium to large in size and bright red in color. Many of the early berries are wedge shaped but the later ones are quite uniformly conic. Though not as firm as Fairfax, they are firm enough to hold up well for shipping. Quality is good.

Premier is a vigorous grower making a good stand of healthy plants. It is widely adapted to a great variety of soil and climatic conditions. It will produce a crop almost anywhere you wish to plant it. Whether you are a commercial grower or a home gardener you cannot go wrong on Premier for your early berries.

For assured profits plant Premier.

FAIRFAX — The Quality Berry

Fairfax is truly a great berry surpassing all others we have grown in quality and firmness. Every year our sales of Fairfax plants have increased. We have increased our plantings yearly and still have not always been able to supply the demand in many seasons. This is the best gauge of the increasing popularity of this grand berry.

With us, Fairfax ripens a few days after Premier. The berries are large to very large and very firm and meaty holding up well for a long time after picking. The berries are bright red when they first ripen but turn dark as they stand either on the plant or in the basket until they become a dark purple. At first this was considered a fault, but, as the public has come to know Fairfax, the dark color has become an asset. It is the trade mark of quality by which consumers can readily identify genuine Fairfax berries and consumers are willing to pay a premium for the grand flavor and quality of Fairfax. Yields are high, at times exceeding Premier with us. The berries are smooth, glossy, beautiful and quite uniformly conic shaped. The plants grow very large with beautiful dark green healthy foliage. Fairfax is not as prolific a plant maker as some varieties but makes a good row. It is more susceptible to frost injury than Premier or Catskill. The fruiting season is exceptionally long.

Plant Fairfax and enjoy the superb quality of nature's finest strawberry. They are so sweet you can eat them without sugar. Once you have tasted them you will understand why we find it hard to restrain our enthusiasm for Fairfax.

CATSKILL — The Best Mid-season Berry

Probably no berry ever forged ahead so rapidly as Catskill after its introduction by the New York State Experiment Station a few years ago. In a very short time it became widely planted and known as the best mid-season berry in the northern states. Like Premier it is widely tolerant of varying soil and climatic conditions. Also, like Premier, it is frost resistant bearing enormous crops of berries every year.

The berries are large to very large, bright red and produced in abundance. They have a characteristically long neck and are often rather rough and irregular in shape. However, this does not seem to detract from their appearance when placed in the basket for sale. The

texture is firm and the quality is good. It has been our experience that in very wet seasons when berries tend to rot badly we seldom find rotten berries among our Catskills. The foliage is dark green and healthy. The plants are vigorous and make a good show.

We find the demand for Catskill increasing yearly. No commercial planting should be without it. Plant Catskill to follow Premier. You will have two sure-croppers and two money makers.

CULVER — A Berry of Attraction

Culver is a heavy yielding variety producing beautiful bright red berries that are red to the center. The fruit is large, smooth, uniformly cone shaped and attractive. Culver truly has the eye appeal that makes berries sell. It is one of the most attractive berries we have grown. They are slightly tart with excellent flavor and quality. The skin of Culver is tender and they should be handled carefully.

Culver is a good plant maker. The plants are vigorous, dark green and healthy.

ROBINSON — The Best Late Variety

Robinson came to us highly recommended from Michigan where it originated. We can readily see why the Michigan growers are so enthusiastic over it as a commercial variety.

Robinson is a prolific plant maker and a tremendous yielder. We have never seen a variety set more berries and carry them to maturity. The berries are a beautiful light red, conic in shape and often distinctively ribbed. They are very large in size and hold up well during the season.

As compared with the old standard varieties, Robinson will equal or outyield Premier or Catskill, is as large or larger in size than Catskill, is not as high quality as Fairfax or Catskill, being only average in this respect, and will set more plants than Premier.

Robinson is without doubt the best late berry for commercial use we have seen in this area. We urge all commercial growers to try it.

SPARKLE — The Freezing Berry

No strawberry ever came to the top in popularity more quickly than Sparkle. We fruited Sparkle for several years before the New Jersey Experiment Station, where it was developed, officially named it and introduced it to the trade. When it was named, we listed it in our catalog. Sales amounted to about 1% of our total sales. In five years sales of Sparkle jumped to almost one-fourth of all our sales. We sold more plants of Sparkle than any other variety. This indicates the tremendous enthusiasm and interest this new variety has created in the Northern strawberry growing area.

One of the reasons for this great interest in Sparkle is its outstanding freezing qualities. In a freezing test at the New York State Experiment Station involving 300 varieties of strawberries, Sparkle topped them all for quality. Sparkle is being widely planted for both home and commercial freezing.

Sparkle, however, is not just a top freezing berry. It is excellent for fresh use either as a home garden or a commercial berry. The bright red shining berries truly "Sparkle" in the basket and have an irresistible eye appeal to the consumer. In addition to eye appeal, Sparkle has the quality and flavor to bring buyers back for more. The berries are medium to large in size, smooth and uniform. They are firm in texture and hold up well. Yields are high.

Sparkle is as outstanding in its plant characteristics as in its fruit. The plants are vigorous, healthy and prolific. The leaves are a beautiful dark green with no trace of the leaf troubles that afflict many varieties. Visitors to our farm remark on the outstanding vigor and growth of the Sparkle beds. We have grown Sparkle under many unfavorable conditions where other varieties have failed to put out a normal number of plants, but have never yet failed to get a good row. Even in 1947, when our area was plagued with daily rains all spring so that we could not set our plants until June and when we had severe drought conditions later in the summer, Sparkle came thru with a good stand of plants. All other varieties except Robinson, which was also good, set less than 50% of a stand of plants.

If you are already a Sparkle booster, we need say no more. If not, you will surely want to try Sparkle this year. It is an excellent mid-season to late variety for home or commercial use.

RED STAR — The Latest of All

Red Star was developed by the U. S. D. A. recently and has been advertised as the best late variety. The plants are very large but make only a moderate number of new plants. Red Star sets such a very heavy crop of berries that it needs a plentiful supply of moisture to mature them to good size. The berries are very large but with us they tend to grow small and somewhat knotty if conditions become hot and dry. Red Star is bright red, firm and somewhat rough and irregular in shape. Quality is good. We recommend that you give Red Star a trial.

TEMPLE — A Berry Made to Order

Temple was developed as a cross between Fairfax and Aberdeen in the search for a new variety which would not be subject to the red stele disease and yet would have the high quality, large yields, and good shipping qualities needed for a first class market berry. Such a berry was badly needed in many areas where red stele had made the growing of old standard varieties unprofitable. The new Temple fills the bill.

The berries are large, conic, smooth and attractive. Quality is very good. The berries are firm enough for long distance shipping. Temple ripens early and is productive. Reports indicate that it is frost resistant. It probably does best on moist fertile soils.

From our experience in one season and from growers reports, we would classify Temple as a vigorous prolific plant maker with unusually tall luxuriant foliage which is resistant to leaf troubles. Our beds of Temple, like our beds of Sparkle, stand out because of their beautiful, clean, dark green leaves. Give Temple a trial.

EVERBEARERS

Everbearing strawberries have long since passed the novelty stage. Countless home gardeners consider the luscious fresh berries they provide thruout the Fall to be a necessity. There is always a ready market at good prices for all the Everbearers one can grow.

Growing Everbearers is not much different from growing standard varieties of strawberries. They should have a rich moist soil. Early spring planting is important. Plant them this Spring, cut the blossoms off until early July, then let them bloom and you can begin in August to pick a crop of delicious berries which will continue thruout the Fall. Everbearers respond well to a little extra care and attention.

We have only a limited supply of plants this year.

MASTODON — The Grand Old Everbearer

This grand old variety has run the gauntlet of the years and still remains one of the most popular everbearers grown. The berries are large, bright red and good quality. Mastodon bears good crops both in the spring and the fall.

The plants of Mastodon are large and vigorous being exceptionally well rooted. It is not as prolific a plant maker as Gem making only a moderate number of plants. For this reason it should be planted closer than most varieties.

Try Mastodon and you will see why it has been a long time favorite.

STREAMLINER

Of the several newer varieties of everbearers we have tried Streamliner has been one of the best with us. The berries are large to very large probably averaging larger than any other everbearer we have grown. They are smooth, glossy and round with a beautiful bright red color. They are very sweet.

Streamliner is an excellent home use variety but probably does not produce heavily enough for commercial use.

PRICES

Prepaid		Transportation charges paid by purchaser						
No. of Plants	100	100	200	300	400	500	1000	5000
EARLY								
Premier	3.25	3.00	5.00	7.00	8.50	10.00	16.00	75.00
Fairfax	3.25	3.00	5.00	7.00	8.50	10.00	16.00	75.00
Temple	3.25	3.00	5.00	7.00	8.50	10.00	16.00	75.00
MID-SEASON								
Catskill	3.25	3.00	5.00	7.00	8.50	10.00	16.00	75.00
Culver	3.25	3.00	5.00	7.00	8.50	10.00	16.00	75.00
LATE								
Sparkle	3.25	3.00	5.00	7.00	8.50	10.00	16.00	75.00
Red Star	3.25	3.00	5.00	7.00	8.50	10.00	16.00	
Robinson	3.25	3.00	5.00	7.00	8.50	10.00	16.00	75.00
EVERBEARERS								
Mastodon	5.25	5.00						
Streamliner	5.25	5.00	8.00					

Plants shipped prepaid through the fourth postal zone only.

Do not add together two or more varieties to obtain a cheaper rate—Each variety must be figured separately.

Stamps (1, 2, and 3 cent) accepted for amounts less than \$1.00.

Prices subject to change without notice.

All plants offered subject to prior sale.

CASH MUST ACCOMPANY ALL ORDERS UNLESS OTHER ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE

References: Postmaster, or Briggs Bank, Clyde, N. Y.

FOR THE EARLIEST BERRIES PLANT

PREMIER—Time tested old favorite. Always produces a crop.

TEMPLE—New. Top quality. Beautiful glossy dark red berries. Large and luscious.

THEN FOLLOW WITH

FAIRFAX—Big. Sweet. Dark red. Finest quality. You will never forget that Fairfax flavor.

CATSKILL—Enormous berries. Bright red. Big yields. Good freezer. Money Maker.

CULVER—Attractive bright red. Big. Fine quality. Fine freezer.

FOR LATE BERRIES TRY

SPARKLE—New. Big yield. Finest quality. Glossy. Beautiful bright red. Excellent freezer.

ROBINSON—Very large. Light red. Very heavy yields.

AND THE VERY LATEST IS

RED STAR—Good quality. Large. Bears well. S.t.r.e.t.c.h.e.s the season.

When the SPRING VARIETIES are thru the EVER-BEARERS will take over and give you mouth watering berries until snow flies.

GROW STRAWBERRIES

for HEALTH

for PLEASURE

for PROFIT